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T H E

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Another Treaty of Arbitration.

The best piece of public news which Christmas just past furnished the world was the information that on that day a treaty of arbitration between France and Italy had been signed at Paris by Mr. Delcassé, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Thornielli, the Italian Ambassador to France.

It had been known ever since the signing of the Franco-English treaty on the 14th of October that negotiations were under way for a treaty between Italy and France. The announcement, therefore, on Christmas day, that the treaty was actually concluded, did not come as a surprise.

The text of the treaty is reported to be identical with that of the Anglo-French convention, which was published in full in our November issue. It therefore provides that for a period of five years all disputes of a judicial nature arising between the two countries and those occurring in connection with the interpretation of treaties shall be submitted to the Hague Court. Questions affecting the honor and vital interests of either nation are reserved.

This treaty, as is readily seen, constitutes another distinct and most important advance of the whole

arbitration movement. If it is the first step that counts, the second one counts more. The Hague Court is fortified by this convention in the confidence and respect of all the civilized nations which united in creating it. The Anglo-French treaty is likewise strengthened by the new engagement. All the world's workers for equity and peace are through it given fresh encouragement to push their propaganda in season and out of season.

We shall soon hear of other agreements of the same kind. The French government, which is now unquestionably at the head of the whole arbitration movement on its political side, has for some time been in negotiation with three or four other countries — Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden — for arbitration treaties. The negotiations are now well advanced, and the publication of the conventions may be expected at an early day.

From this point of view, the new year opens certainly under the most auspicious omens.

The President's Message and Arbitration.

President Roosevelt, in his message to Congress on the 7th of December, took more advanced ground on the subject of arbitration than he had done before; indeed, from the practical point of view, more advanced ground than any previous President had ever taken. He reviews succinctly the Venezuela trouble, and sets forth the manner in which the adjustment of the claims had been removed from the domain of violence and turned over to mixed commissions and to the Hague Court. Of the manner in which the question of preferential treatment was referred to the Hague, he speaks thus:

"A demand was then made by the so-called blockading powers that the sums ascertained to be due to their citizens by such mixed commissions should be accorded payment in full before anything was paid upon the claims of any of the so-called peace powers. Venezuela, on the other hand, insisted that all her creditors should be paid upon a basis of exact equality.

"During the efforts to adjust this dispute it was suggested by the powers in interest that it should be referred to me for decision, but I was clearly of the opinion that a far wiser course would be to submit the question to the permanent court of arbitration at The Hague. It seemed to me to offer an admirable opportunity to advance the practice of the peaceful settlement of disputes between